

Investigators: Navy Yard shooter's weapon shows troubled mind

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WASHINGTON — Washington Navy Yard shooter Aaron Alexis was on the loose for about an hour during his Sept. 16 rampage, engaging law enforcement officials in a series of gun battles inside the headquarters of Naval Sea Systems Command before he was killed, officials revealed Wednesday.

Chilling photos and videos newly released by the FBI showed Alexis arriving at the installation, and later stalking through the halls of Building 197 armed with a sawed-off shotgun as he sought victims.

Documents on Alexis's electronic devices, including a laptop, cellphone and flash drives, indicated that the former sailor who had recently begun working as a contractor at the Navy yard had no plans to leave the scene alive, said Valerie Parlave, FBI assistant director in charge of the Washington field office.

"There are indicators that Alexis was prepared to die during the attack, and that he accepted death as the inevitable consequence of his actions," she said.

Officials declined to offer a detailed time line of Alexis' actions inside the headquarters building, where he eventually killed 12 employees and wounded several more.

But Parlave said bizarre inscriptions on a shotgun he had purchased days earlier — shortening the barrel and buttstock with a saw to make it more concealable — offered insight into his disturbed mind.

The phrases carved into the gun included "End to the torment!" "Not what yall say!" and "Better off this way!" Another — "my ELF weapon!" — referenced Alexis' apparent belief he was being controlled by extremely low frequency electromagnetic radiation, a technology developed by the Navy for submarine communications.

Authorities praised the coordinated response to the shootings by various agencies, including the FBI, District of Columbia police and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service.

One of the first responders was an NCIS agent who arrived at work just as frightened building residents began streaming out. Within five minutes of the first report, the agent who normally investigates white collar crime was inside and looking for the shooter, said Mike Monroe, special agent in charge of the NCIS Washington field office.

“He immediately went back to his car to retrieve his [armored] vest... and he entered the building with his handgun,” Monroe said in an interview with Stars and Stripes. “As we’re trained to do, he moved toward the threat.”

Other agents soon arrived and helped evacuate the building. Along with other agencies, NCIS agents twice engaged Alexis in gun battles, Monroe said. When a District of Columbia police officer was badly wounded, NCIS agents pulled him out of the line of fire, and one carried him down several flights of stairs to safety.

Though Alexis was soon killed by a D.C. police officer, law enforcement officials remained uncertain until midafternoon whether any other shooters were still active, Monroe said in an interview with Stars and Stripes.

Once they were sure no threats remained, NCIS agents began interviewing witnesses and survivors, many of whom had been under a shelter-in-place order since just after 8 a.m.

Since the shooting, about 115 NCIS agents — 10 percent of the total number worldwide, and from 6 field offices — have poured in to help the investigation, which is being conducted in conjunction with the FBI, Monroe said.

Monroe predicted the results of the investigation would be coming “fairly soon,” and would provide more than a simple outline of Alexis’ actions and motivations.

“We want to be able to take the lessons from this and use that to prevent it from happening again,” he said.

Broader inquiries

The immediate findings of the criminal investigation are expected to inform several DOD investigations aimed at determining how Alexis — who had a history of violent acts that came to light only after the shooting — was able to gain a security clearance and then carry out his attack.

“To begin this effort, we need to find out exactly what happened last Monday at the Washington Navy yard, and the bottom line is we need to know how an employee was able to bring a weapon and ammunition onto a DOD installation, and how warning flags were either missed, ignored or not addressed in a timely manner,” Deputy Defense Secretary Ash Carter said Wednesday at the Pentagon.

Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel last week ordered two security reviews — one by his office and one by an independent panel — due Nov. 15. The Navy is conducting its own review of security measures worldwide, due Oct. 31.

Hagel’s security review will be spearheaded by Michael Vickers, undersecretary of defense for intelligence. The independent review, meanwhile, will be overseen by two former defense officials — Paul Stockton, a former assistant secretary of defense for homeland security who oversaw an internal

review in the wake of the 2009 Fort Hood massacre, and Adm. Eric Olson, a former commander of U.S. Special Operations Command.

The findings of all three will be “synthesized” and presented to Hagel by Dec. 20, Carter said.

“As Secretary Hagel said last week, where there are gaps we will close them, where there are inadequacies we will address them, and where there are failures we will correct them,” Carter said. “That process is under way. We owe nothing less to the victims, their families and every member of the Department of Defense.”

<http://www.stripes.com/news/us/investigators-navy-yard-shooter-s-weapon-shows-troubled-mind-1.243371>



This image from video provided by the FBI, shows Aaron Alexis moves through the hallways of Building #197 at the Washington Navy Yard on Monday, Sept. 16, 2013, in Washington, carrying a Remington 870 shotgun. Alexis, a 34-year-old former Navy reservist and IT contractor, shot and killed 12 people inside a Navy Yard building last week before being killed in a shootout with police.

FBI



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